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SERMON

OCCASIONED by the

DEATH

Of the REVEREND

Mr. *Michael Bruce.*

PREACHED at

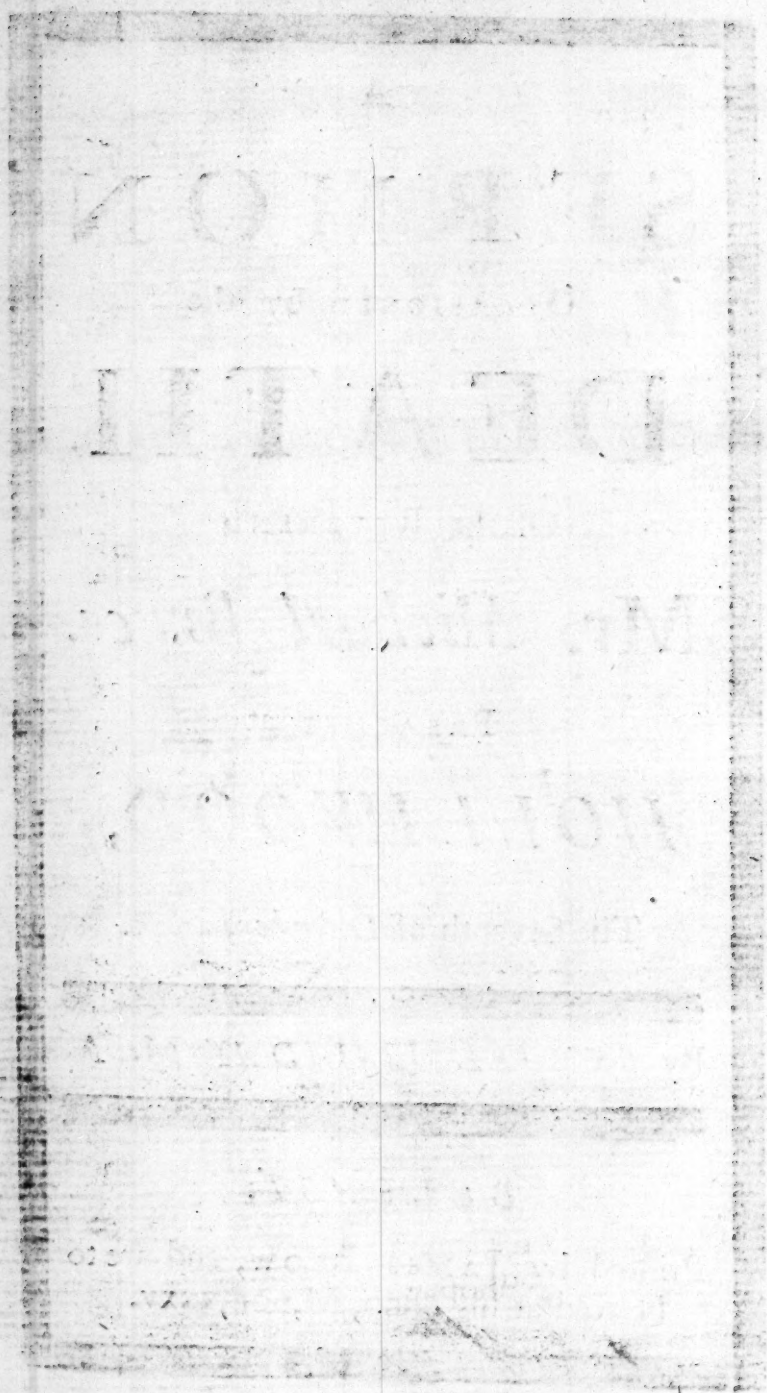
HOLLIWOOD,

The Seventh of *December*, 1735.

By *SAMUEL HALIDAY* M. A.

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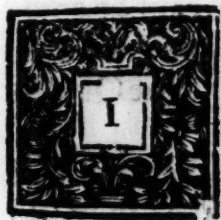
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SERMON, &c.

PSAL. XXXVII. 37.

*Mark the perfect Man, and behold the upright;
For the End of that Man is Peace.*



IN this Psalm *David* answers an Objection, which in all Ages has been made against a religious Life, namely this, that it is in vain to serve God, because good Men are often afflicted, and bad Men prosperous in the World. This Observation has puzzled many of the Heathen Philosophers, and some good Men also, who have enjoyed the Benefit of a supernatural divine Revelation. From this Consideration *Asaph* was tempted to conclude, that he had *cleansed his Heart to no purpose, and washed his Hands in Innocency, Psal. lxxiii. 13.* And

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Jer. xii. 1. 2. The Prophet says, righteous art thou, O LORD, when I plead with thee ; yet let me talk with thee of thy Judgments. Wherefore doth the Way of the Wicked prosper ? Wherefore are all they happy who deal very treacherously ?

THE Psalmist furnishes Us, with a solid Answer to this Objection. He does not deny, that wicked Men are sometimes more prosperous in the World than the righteous ; but he denies that their State is therefore better and **happier, than that of the Just.** He observes that the outward Prosperity of ungodly Persons is of a very short duration, and altogether uncertain ; That in their most flourishing Condition, they are Strangers to true Happiness ; that they are disquieted by Envy, Wrath, Malice, and such like turbulent Passions ; that they are perpetually busy in contriving and executing mischievous Devices, and therefore cannot enjoy inward Peace, and Self-Approbation ; and that they are hateful to Almighty God, and the Objects of his Vengeance.

ON the other Hand, he observes that righteous Men trust in God ; that they do good, and consequently enjoy the most rational Pleasure of which the Humane Mind is capable, even the Gratification of the noblest Instincts, which our Creator has planted in us ; that Meditations on God, the Assurance of his Favour, and Converses with him, afford them the most pure and heavenly Delight ; that they have no Cause for Anxiety, but may with a cheerful Confidence, commit their Way to God ; that
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they are meek and calm ; that they delight themselves in the Abundance of Peace ; of Peace with their Neighbours, there being but few so wicked and malicious ; as to hurt or disturb those who constantly follow that which is good ; of Peace with God, for, if our own Hearts condemn us not, we are so constituted, that, we cannot but expect the Divine Approbation ; of Peace in their own Minds, for the Hearts of those Men, who are conscious to themselves of their own Integrity cannot reproach them.

THE *Psalmist* further observes that vertuous Men enjoy with Relish, the Portion which God has given them under the Sun, how scanty soever it may be ; being content with the Lot, which the wise and good Ruler of the World has appointed for them ; being truly thankful for the Benefits conferred on them, and taking pleasure in shewing Mercy and Kindness according to their Abilities. He also declares, that such pious Men enjoy the Favour and Protection of Almighty God, who will plead their Cause, vindicate their Innocency, and abundantly bless them, their Posterity, and their Friends. He adds, that in deep Distress, they shall have strong Consolations, that the God in whom they trust will support and deliver them.

BUT what the *Psalmist* chiefly insists on, is, the last Issue of Things, in which, as he often intimates in this Psalm, there shall be a very remarkable Difference between the Righteous and the Wicked. And this is the important Instruction

tion which he delivers in the Text, and in the following Verse, *Mark*, says he, *the perfect Man, and behold the upright, for the End of that Man is Peace; But the Transgressors shall be destroyed together, the End of the Wicked shall be cut off.*

'T IS not necessary, critically to determine whether by the End of the upright Man, and of the Wicked, the Sacred Author meant their Death. There are Reasons for believing that he intended to vindicate the Truth of the Promise of long Life, and Prosperity, in the Land of *Canaan*, made to the *Jews* on Condition of Obedience to the Law of *Moses*, and of the Threatnings of severe temporal Judgments to be inflicted on the disobedient: and that he intended to instruct Men not to judge rashly, if for a Season, things should seem to happen otherwise, but to wait patiently, encouraging them to expect a Turn of Affairs, by which they should have full Evidence of the Divine Veracity.

I N the old Testament we have many Instances of this Kind. It pleased GOD for a while grievously to afflict *Job*, who was a perfect and an upright Man, but he afterwards blessed his latter End more than his Beginning. *Joseph* was hated by his Brethren, and sold for a Slave, but he was afterwards raised to great Honour. *David* also had long been persecuted by *Saul*, and was afterwards exalted to the Throne of *Israel*. He suffered great Hardships during the Rebellion of his Son *Absalom*, and was afterwards happily restored to his Kingdom, and ve-
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ry probably wrote this *Psalm* on that Occasion.

T H E R E is no Doubt but that during the *Mosaic* Oeconomy, while the Sanctions of GOD's Law were temporal Rewards and Punishments, the Providence of GOD did more frequently and remarkably interpose for delivering virtuous Men from their Troubles, and rendering their outward Estate in the World prosperous; then now under the Christian Dispensation, by which Life and Immortality have been brought to light. If this had not been the Case, it would have been more difficult for a *Jew* than for a *Christian* to Solve the Objection stated in this *Psalm*.

B U T this is not so to be understood as if good Men, during the Continuance of the *Jewish* Religion, had had no Knowledge of a future State and of Rewards and Punishments to be distributed in it. The Light of Nature has taught Mankind, very generally, to believe these Things. Whosoever attentively considers the Nature of *Bodies* and of *Spirits*, must perceive that there is no Agreement between Extension, Divisibility, Passiveness, or a Capacity of being acted upon, which are the Properities of *Matter*, and the Powers of thinking and acting from Choice, which are the Properties of *Spirits*; and must therefore conclude, that our Souls are not material Substances, but Spirits, and consequently are incapable of Dissolution, and must exist forever, unless they be turned into nothing by that Almighty Power, which at first created them.

AND we have no Reason to believe that GOD, who, as far as we know, never has annihilated any of his Creatures, will annihilate our Souls, the most excellent of all his Creatures, of which, by the Light of Nature, we can have any Knowledge.

HAD he intended to do this, there is Reason to believe, that he would not have made us capable of forming an Idea of Eternity, and that he would not have planted in Us a vehement Desire of Immortality.

BESIDES this, the Light of Nature discovers that GOD is righteous and good ; But nevertheless we see that virtuous Men are not always rewarded, nor wicked Men always punished in this Life. We have therefore Cause to expect a future Life in which the Glory of the Divine Righteousness and Goodness shall be made manifest.

THOSE Joys and Hopes which spring up in the Mind of a Man who is conscious to himself of well-doing, those Stings and Terrours which a Man feels when conscious to himself of Wickedness, and which are usually strongest at the Approach of Death, are to be considered as the Voice of Nature, that is, of God the Author of Nature, declaring that in a future State, there shall be a Reward for the Righteous and the Wicked.

AND concerning this Point, some Light was superadded by the *Mosaic* Revelation, by which GOD in very strong Expressions declared that he loves Virtue and hates Vice, that he will re-ward

ward the Upright and punish the workers of Iniquity. Now the *Jews* could not but observe that in this World Virtue is not always rewarded, nor Vice punished. The History of righteous *Abel* murdered because his Piety was acceptable to GOD, was alone Sufficient to convince them of this. They had therefore Reason to conclude, that in a Life to come, GOD will discover his Love of Holiness and Hatred of Sin, by rewarding the one and Punishing the other. And in this Conjecture they might have been confirmed by the Translation of *Enoch* and *Elias*, and God's calling himself the GOD of *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob*, after their Death, though they had enjoyed no great Prosperity in this World; From whence it might be inferred that they continued to exist, and were happy in the Enjoyment of the Divine Favour. And in the *Psalms* and Writings of the *Prophets*, we find some Expressions which in their highest and strongest Sense can relate only to a future State, and Rewards and Punishments to be distributed in it.

It would therefore be rash and unwarrantable to affirm, that in this Text the *Psalmist* had no View to the Happiness of good Men at the Time of their Death, and in a future State; And seeing that by the End of upright Men, and of Transgressors mentioned in these verses, their Death may very well be understood, which puts an End to all their Troubles and Joys, to all their Purposes, Labours and Concernments under the Sun, I may be allowed to explain my Text in this Sense.

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THE Method which I intend to observe is this;

First, To shew you who they are whom the holy Scriptures call *perfect and upright Men*.

Secondly, To speak of their Happiness at the time of their Death, *their End is Peace*.

Thirdly, To illustrate the *Psalmist's* Observation, by an Example which we have lately seen, of the happy Death of a truly perfect and upright Man, in the scriptural Sense of these Words. And

Fourthly, To conclude with some useful Advices.

First then, I will endeavour briefly to explain who they are whom the Scriptures call perfect and upright Men. You all know, that since Sin first enter'd into the World, no meer Man has ever been absolutely Perfect, and Upright. In this Sense, *Job* says, Chap. ix. 20. *If I justify my self, my own Mouth shall condemn me, If I say I am perfect, it shall also prove me Perverse. We have all sinned, and come short of the Glory of God. If God were severe to mark our Iniquities, we could not stand. We have Reason to pray in the Words of the holy Psalmist; LORD, enter not into Judgment with thy Servants, for in thy Sight shall no living Man be justified. We all need the Grace of the Gospel; the holiest Men on the Earth, are far from absolute Perfection. Even they who have Fellowship with God, walking in the Light, as he is in the Light, deceive themselves, if they say, that they have no Sin. For, as St. James ob-*
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serves, in many Things we offend all. Jam. iii. 2.

BUT they are perfect and upright in the Scriptural Sense of this Character, who are sincerely pious, who truly love GOD, and are devoted to his Fear, who worship him in Spirit and in Truth, who are obedient and Submissive to his Will, who place their Trust and Confidence in GOD, who set the LORD always before them. That true Piety is a necessary part of Perfection appears from the account given of Noah, Gen. vi. 9. *Noah was a just Man, and perfect in his Generation; and Noah walked with GOD: And from the Charge given to Abraham Gen. xvii. 1. I am the almighty God, walk before me, and be thou perfect.*

THEY are perfect and upright who are full of Benevolence, Compassion and Benignity to Mankind; who *love their Neighbours as themselves*, and are *Merciful as their heavenly Father is Merciful*. That in strong Benevolence, fervent and extensive Charity, Christian perfection chiefly consists, the Instructions delivered by our Saviour Mat. v. 44. &c. fully prove: *Love your Enemies*, says he, *bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, And pray for them who despitefully use you, and persecute you, that ye may be the Children of your Father who is in Heaven, for he maketh his Sun to rise on the evil, and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just, and on the unjust. For if ye love them who love you, what Reward have ye? do not even Publicans the same? And if ye salute your Brethren only, what do you more than others?*

others ? do not even the Publicans so ? Be ye therefore perfect, as your Father who is in Heaven is perfect.

THEY are perfect and upright who are free from the Dominion of Covetousness, Ambition, and sensual Lusts. Who are sober, temperate, chaste, pure and holy in all manner of Conversation, even as God who hath called us is holy. That in these things also the Essence of Christian Perfection is placed, may be inferred from the Apostle Pauls Exhortation 2 Cor. vii. 1. *Let us cleanse our selves from all Filthiness of the Flesh and Spirit, perfecting Holiness in the Fear of God.*

SELF-denial also is a constituent Part of Christian Perfection. This our Saviour teaches Mat. xix. 21. Where we read that to one who pretended that from his Youth he had observed all the precepts of Morality, Jesus said, *if thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the Poor, and thou shalt have Treasure in Heaven.*

THEY are perfect; and upright who keep a strict Watch over their Thoughts and Words as well as their Actions. This St. James intimates Chap. iii. 2. *If any Man offend not in Word, the same is a perfect Man.*

THEY are perfect and upright who abhor all Fraud and Deceit, the Hebrew Word which is here translated *Perfect* might as well have been render'd *Sincere*. He therefore is perfect whose Heart is Honest, whose professions are true, who is an Israelite indeed in whom there is no Guile.

HE is an upright Man who is inflexibly determined to do that which is right, which God and his own Conscience will approve.

HE is a perfect and upright Man in whom all Moral and Christian Virtues are and abound. Who though he is far from absolute Perfection, is nevertheless tending towards the highest Degrees of Perfection to which a mortal Man can attain. Who is deeply sensible of his own Imperfections, with sincere Humility acknowledges them. Saying with St. Paul Phil. iii. 12. 13, 14. *Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect, but I follow after that I may apprehend, that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus ; I count not my self to have apprehended, but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the Mark for the prize of the high Calling of God in Christ Jesus.*

HE is a perfect Man in whom the Image of CHRIST and of GOD is conspicuous, and who constantly endeavours to be more and more conformed to those perfect Models. *Whose Path is as the morning Light, shinning more and more unto the perfect Day.*

THIS is the Account which the holy Scriptures give Us of the Character of a perfect and upright Man, and it is intirely agreeable to the Dictates of Reason. Man is a Creature endowed with Understanding and Liberty, capable of knowing GOD, of discerning a Difference between Right and Wrong, Good and Evil, and

and of discovering the Obligations which arise from the Frame of his Nature, the Circumstances in which he is placed, and the Relations in which he stands to other Beings. He cannot but perceive a native Beauty and Excellency in Virtue, and it's Tendency to promote publick and private Happiness. He feels good Instincts planted in him, by which he is powerfully excited to the practice of Virtue. He is so constituted that he must be self-condemned when he wilfully swerves from the Paths of it. He is therefore undoubtedly a Moral Agent, a Being formed for the Practice of Virtue and Religion ; and consequently 'tis manifest, that the highest Perfection of such a Creature as Man, must consist in being virtuous and religious.

THIS is all that I shall offer for explaining who they are, whom the sacred Writings denominate perfect and upright Men.

I now proceed under the Second general Head, to speak concerning the Happiness of upright Men at the time of Death ; and because I preach to a Christian Audience, I will suppose such Men, when dying to have the Faith of the Gospel.

'TIS true indeed that Death is shocking to Human Nature. The separation of the Soul and Body, that Putrefaction which the Body must undergo, the irrecoverable Loss of all those earthly Possessions and Enjoyments which have been accounted valuable, that everlasting *Farewell* which Men must bid to all their dear Relatives and Friends, that unknown State into
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which they must enter, and from which they never shall return, those Apprehensions which they have concerning a future Judgment and righteous Distribution of Punishments and Rewards, are awful Things. And our wise Creator, has planted in Us a vehement Desire of Life, for exciting Us carefully to preserve it. Some also who are not affraid of the Consequences of Death, dread its Agonies. It must therefore be acknowledged, that with Respect to the Bulk of Mankind, Death is justly and elegantly called by *Bildad, The King of Terrours*, Job xviii. 14.

'Tis also true that good Men often die of as long continued, and as painful Diseases as the Wicked.

BUT in this is the Difference, at the time of Death the perfect and upright Man, supported by the Christian Faith, has strong Consolation; and great Peace.

First, He is not then filled with distracting Terrours, or disquieting Remorse arising from dismal Reflections on a wicked Life, on Crimes unrepented of, and unpardoned. He will indeed be affected with a godly Sorrow for those Sins of which according to the gracious Terms of the New Covenant he has obtained Remission; and with a deep Concern for all his Faults. And such Sorrow and Concern are then seasonable and becoming. But he is sure, *that there is no Condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the Flesh, but after the Spirit.* He will with an humble
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Confidence renew his Recourse to the tender Mercy of God by Faith in the Blood of Jesus; and shall have a Right triumphantly to say, *Who shall lay any thing to the Charge of God's Elect? 'tis God that justifieth, who is he that condemneth? 'tis Christ that died, yea, rather that is risen again, who is even at the right Hand of God; who also maketh Intercession for us.*

Secondly, A perfect and upright Man is, at the time of Death, supported by conscious Integrity. He knows that he has endeavoured to live suitably to the Dignity of his Nature, to the End for which he was created, and to the Design of the Christian Revelation. He is conscious to himself that he honestly intended to do Service to his Maker, Honour to Religion, and Good to his Fellow-Creatures. His Heart tells him, that it has been his Study and Care to obey the Laws of God, and to imitate the divine Perfections.

'Tis true indeed that such an one will be deeply humbled in the sight of God, when he reflects on his own Failures and Imperfections; and considers with how little Zeal, with how much Weakness he has served his great Master, and how many Opportunities of doing Good he has neglected to improve. Such Humbleness of Mind is becoming, in the most eminent Saints, at all times, but especially when they expect soon to appear before an all-knowing and infinitely holy God. Nevertheless a good Christian knows that God will not despise the sincere though imperfect Services which are done

done to him, and may with humble Trust expect the promised Reward, though not reckoned of Debt, but of Grace. *His rejoicing is this, the Testimony of his Conscience, that in Simplicity and godly Sincerity, not with fleshly Wisdom, but by the Grace of God, he has had his Conversation in the World.* Such an one is qualify'd for the Enjoyment of Happiness, which is the natural Result of Virtue. Nothing can be more agreeable to true Philosophy, than the Prophet's Observation, *Isa. xxxii. 17. That the Work of Righteousness shall be Peace, and the Effect of Righteousness, Quietness and Assurance forever.*

Thirdly, THE Prospect of a speedy Separation of his Soul from his Body, cannot terrify a perfect and upright Man, who believes the Gospel. He has long been accustomed to consider his Soul as a noble and heavenly Guest, lodged in a frail Cottage. He knows that when *his earthly House of this Tabernacle shall be dissolved, he shall obtain a Building of God, an House not made with Hands, eternal in the Heavens.* He considers that *while he is at home in the Body (or sojourns in it) he is absent from the Lord.* His Mind is therefore firm and erect, he is confident, and willing rather to be absent from the Body, that he may be present with the Lord. He knows that *to depart, and be with Christ, is better.*

Fourthly, AN upright Christian will not be disturbed because that his Body is to be turned into Corruption and Food for Worms, in the
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Grave; and indeed this ought not to give any Man the least Uneasiness, for we have no further any Concernment with our Bodies, after that our Souls are departed out of them. But yet it is certain that few of those who have made it their chief Care to pamper their Bodies, can, with perfect serenity, *say to Corruption thou art my Father, and to the Worm thou art my Mother, and my Sister.* But a good Man, who firmly believes the Gospel, knows that *the Hour is coming when the dead shall hear the Voice of the Son of God, and live.* That though our Bodies are *Sown*, or committed to the Earth, in *Corruption, Dishonour and Weakness*, yet we shall be raised in *Incorruption, Glory and Power*; clothed with *spiritual Bodies*, that is to say, Bodies free from carnal Appetites and Necessities, immortal, fit Habitations for most active Spirits, *fashioned like unto that glorious Body*, which our Redeemer now wears. Such an one therefore will leave his Body to be buried in the peaceful Hope of a blessed Resurrection to Life everlasting.

Fifthly, A perfect and upright Man who believes the Doctrine of Christ, will not, at the time of Death, heavily regret the Loss of all his worldly Wealth, Possessions, Honours, and delightful Enjoyments. He has taken his Affections off those Things, and set them on Things infinitely more valuable. He has *made to himself Friends of unrighteous*, that is, deceitful Mammon; By giving to the Poor he has lent to the Lord; being rich in good Works, he has
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laid up for himself in Store a good Foundation for the time to come. He has Treasure in Heaven, an Inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and which fadeth not away, reserved for him there. A Crown of Life, Righteousness and Glory, shall be given him. He knows, that in the Presence of God there is Fulness of Joy, and at his right Hand everlasting Pleasures.

Sixthly, A Person of the excellent Character which I have described, can have no Cause for anxious Thoughts concerning his dear Relations and Friends, whom he leaves behind him in the World, or for Bitterness and Grief at his parting with them. With great Chearfulness he may commit them to the Care of his Wife, compassionate, and all-sufficient heavenly Father, whose Mercy is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his Righteousness unto their Children's Children; who bleisseth those that are blessed of the righteous. And he knows that the Society to which he shall forever be joined is incomparably more desirable than that from which he shall be taken away.

Seventhly, S U C H an one will when dying, be free from frightful Apprehensions concerning that unknown World into which he is entring. He knows that GOD, whom he has chosen for his sure and only Portion, is every where present, and able to render his faithful Servants and Friends happy. And the new Testament assures him that in Heaven Light and Love, Righteousness and Holiness shall for ever dwell.

IN the *Eighth* and *last* Place a perfect and upright Man, who dies in the LORD will not, at the Hour of Death be dismayed at the Terrours of the last Judgment, and it's important Issues. 'Tis true indeed that the Consideration of these Things will fill him with an holy Awe, and render the Temper of his Mind very serious and solemn. But his Heart does not condemn him as guilty of Hypocrisy or Wickedness, and therefore he has a solid yet very humble Confidence toward GOD. Jesus Christ has expressly declared that when he *shall come in his Glory, and all the holy Angels with him, and shall sit upon the Throne of his Glory, he will say to the righteous and charitable, come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the Foundation of the World.* And that they shall then *enter into Life eternal*, into that happy State the Felicity and Glory of which very far transcends all that we can now express, or conceive. In which we shall behold the Glory of the Lamb; in which we shall see GOD's Face in Righteousness and be satisfied with his Likeness; in which we shall be rendered truly perfect in Wisdom and Virtue. Though *it does not yet appear what we shall be, yet we know that when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.* O! the blessed Hope. Whoever has it, his latter End must be peace.

LET us set in Opposition to this, the wretched End of the Wicked. If they will allow themselves, at the time of Death, seriously to consider

consider Matters (a thing, which it will hardly then be in their Power to avoid) they will find nothing but an immense Load of Guilt contracted, and most dreadful Prospects with respect to Futurity. Their *All* is for ever lost. They have no cheerful Hopes, no powerful Consolations to support them ; except those which are afforded them by vile Deceivers, who teach Men to substitute foolish and abominable Superstitions, in the Room of Virtue and Holiness. *Their own Hearts condemn them, and they certainly know that God is greater than their Hearts, and knows all things.* There remains nothing but a certain fearful looking for of Judgment, and fiery Indignation, which shall devour the Adversaries.

My Friends, a virtuous and religious Life is certainly the most pleasant and happy Life which a reasonable Creature can lead. But what has been said under this Second Head, is sufficient to convince you, that although the Difficulties of such a Life were supposed to be a Thousand times greater than really they are, yet it would be our truest Wisdom to submit to them.

I go on, under the *Third* general Head, to illustrate the Observation which we are directed by the *Psalmist* to make, from an Instance which you have lately seen of the happy Death of a perfect and upright Man in the Sense in which this Character has been explained.

I will hardly say any thing concerning the Family from which your late worthy Pastor descended. You all know that it is
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ancient and reputable. * You also know that he had the Advantage of a liberal Education : And that few have been happier with respect to valuable natural Endowments. His Understanding was clear and penetrating, his Memory strong, and his Judgment exact. Few, very few have been blessed with a greater share of good Sense : But I will not insist on these Things, because they do not belong to his Moral Character.

His Piety was sincere and rational, free from Superstition and Enthusiasm. His Mind was impressed with just and lively Sentiments of the glorious Majesty and Perfections of God, And with such Sentiments, he laboured in his publick Ministrations to impress the Minds of his Hearers. Proving with irresistible Evidence, that GOD is the Creator and Governour of the World, that on Him all Things depend, that He is every where Present, Omniscient, Almighty,

* He was in the fourth Generation, of the Posterity of the Rev'd Mr. Robert Bruce ; who was a Gentleman of Note, and a very eminent Minister of the Church of Scotland, in the Reign of King James the Sixth, and was for some time a principal Counsellor of that Monarch. His Father and Grand-Father were faithful Ministers of the Gospel, and very worthy. His Mother was a very prudent and religious Gentlewoman, whose pious Care it was, early to recommend to all her Children the Love and Practice of Virtue.

We have in this Family, a notable Instance of the Truth of the Psalmist's Observation, That *the Seed of the Righteous is blessed.* And a Proof of the Wisdom and Importance of the Precept given by Solomon, Prov. xxii. 6. *Train up a Child in the Way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.*

mighty, all-sufficient, infinitely wise, righteous, merciful, and gracious. He testified with an holy Fervour, that *God is Love*, kind and beneficent, and therefore most amiable.

HE had a just sense of the Greatness of the Benefits which GOD has bestowed on Us his unworthy Creatures : And especially of his amazing Goodness in sending his Son into the World, to redeem Us, to instruct Us concerning the Nature of GOD, and of true Religion, and the Rewards and Punishments of the World to come, and to publish the most gracious Terms of Acceptance with GOD. These are subjects on which he frequently preached, declaring with warm zeal and convincing Force that *this saying is true, and worthy of all Acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the World to save Sinners ;* that only in the Gospel of CHRIST we have *the Words of Eternal Life ;* and that the Terms of the Gospel are most reasonable, and the lowest and easiest which could have been proposed, consistent with the Glory of GOD, the Interests of Virtue, and the Good of Men.

ON these Sentiments his Piety was founded. He truly feared, and honoured GOD, and loved him above all things ; He was thankful to GOD, for his unspeakable Gifts ; He testified his Gratitude to the supreme Being by honest Endeavours to do what he judged to be pleasing to him. He was full of Submission to the Will of GOD, delighted with this Thought that the World is governed by unerring Wisdom and perfect Goodness. By many fore Afflictions

ons did it please GOD to try his Resignation to the divine Will, but he was dumb, and opened not his Mouth in bitter Complaints, but said *the Lord hath given and the Lord hath taken away. Blessed be the Name of the Lord.* In GOD alone he reposed his Trust. He sought for his chiefest Happiness in the Enjoyment of the Divine Favour. The Worship which he offered to the Deity was humble and devout. And a solid Persuasion of his Acceptance with GOD was to him a perpetual Source of Cheerfulness and Joy. And in his publick Discourses he incessantly endeavoured to excite his Hearers to the practise of true Piety ; to perswade them to *reverence God, to love him with all their Heart and Soul*, to remember and thankfully to acknowledge *all his Benefits* ; He invincibly demonstrated, that *this is the Love of God, that we keep his Commandments* ; He perswaded Men to aquiesce and rejoice in this, that *the Lord God omnipotent reigneth*, to trust in the LORD in well-doing, to say to GOD *whom have I in Heaven, but thee, and on the Earth there is none whom I desire besides thee* ; to account it *good for them to draw near to God* ; to *walk humbly with him* ; to make Supplication to him ; to *praise him for his Righteous Judgments* ; to esteem his Service their Delight.

HE was full of Benevolence to Mankind ; of sincere and fervent Charity to all his Christian Brethren ; of Compassion to the Afflicted ; of Kindness and Benignity. He was always ready to do Good to the utmost of his Power ;
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most affable, complaisant and obliging, but it was manifest to all who conversed with him that his Complaisance was meerly the Effect of good will, and did not proceed from a Regard to Ceremony, or a Desire to recommend himself to the Esteem of other Men. He was a Man of great Sincerity, He utterly disdained all manner of Fraud and Dissimulation. He was exceedingly careful to do no Wrong, and in Matters of Justice his Goodness and Integrity preserved him from Errors; He freely forgave the Injuries which were done him. For even this good Man was ill used. By most unreasonable Prejudices and Surmises many of his Hearers were induced to forsake his Ministry, though they were ready to acknowledge, that his Doctrine had always been pious, solid, and edifying, and that his Conversation had always been unblamable, good and holy. He freely forgave them, and earnestly prayed to GOD to forgive them; he always made the best Apology for them that could possibly be made, and sued for Christian Communion with those who had deserted his Ministry. But here I draw a Vail. And have not mentioned this Affair with a Design to give any of you who are here present, or any of your Neighbours pain, (though I sincerely wish, and heartily pray, that the guilty may repent) but my View is to warn you all against Bigotry, blind and intemperate Zeal, by which in all Ages many well meaning Men have been misled, and the mischievous effects of which the best of Men have usually felt most sensibly. O !

may the GOD of Peace impart the Spirit of Love and of a sound Mind, to all the Subjects of the Prince of Peace.

I proceed. Your late Reverend Pastor was a Man of exceeding great Candour, a sincere Lover of Truth, ever open to Conviction, always inclined to put the most favourable Construction upon the Words and Actions of other Men. He was truly good in all Relations; a loving Husband, a prudent and indulgent Father, a wise and faithful Friend.

As he lived in the Practise of these Virtues, so likewise did he with becoming Vehemency, and great Strength of manly Eloquence, recommend them to others. He inculcated *the royal Law of Love*, and demonstrated *Charity to be the End of the Commandment*, the distinguishing Character of Christ's Disciples, the most important of all the Christian Virtues. He shewed the Necessity of exercising Mercy, in order to our obtaining Mercy from God; of forgiving, that our Sins may be forgiven. He proved that *Judgment, Mercy and Truth are the weightier Matters of the Law*; that we must abstain from judging and censuring our Neighbours, if we would escape the Condemnation of GOD; and that a good Christian must be good in every social Relation.

He was a Man of most strict Sobriety and Temperance, and of great Modesty, which usually accompanies the truest Worth, but in which he certainly exceeded, which many of his Friends did regret. He was clothed with Humility,
but

but was far from Meanness. He was endowed with Christian Magnanimity, and was of a truly great and generous Soul. No Regard to the Authority of Men in religious Matters, to Favour or Hatred, to Applause or Reproach, to Threats or Persecutions, to worldly Losses or Advantages, could move him to abandon the Cause of Christian Liberty, Truth and Charity. He despised this vain and transitory World. His Temper and Conversation were heavenly. He was far from Selfishness, incapable of forming any base, narrow, interested Designs; and true self-Denial rendred him steady and unshaken. He had warm and strong Affections, but they were under the Government of Reason, to whose Voice he listned, and whose Dictates he carefully obeyed. And it was remarkable, that when ever he argued concerning any important Subject with uncommon Warmth, in proportion to it, his Reasoning grew clearer and stronger. From this Government of his Passions and the Testimony of a good Conscience proceeded his Calmness and cheerful Serenity.

THESE Virtues he with a decent Ardour, and perswasive Evidence recommended in his Sermons; teaching and maintaining the Necessity of Sobriety, Temperance, Modesty, Humility, Courage and Resolution. He instructed and exhorted Christians to stand fast in the Liberty with which CHRIST has made them free; And shewed from the Scriptures, that the Disciples of CHRIST, are indispensibly obliged to receive one another, as CHRIST also hath received

ceived them to the Glory of GOD, and that the Unity of the Christian Church must be preserved, not by Imposition, or the Dint of Authority, but by the Exercise of Lowliness, Meekness and Forbearance. He taught Christians to live above the World, to govern their Minds with due Care, *keeping the Heart with all Diligence, because out of it are the Issues of Life.* He convincingly proved, that there is nothing better, than *that a Man should rejoice, and do Good, all his Days.*

HE was thoroughly convinced of the Beauty and Excellency of Virtue, and found the Practice of it extreamly Delightful, He knew that without it, 'tis impossible to be happy; He therefore perswaded others to mind those things which *are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, of good Report, virtuous and Praise-worthy*; assuring them that, *all Wisdom's Ways are Pleasantness, and all her Paths Peace. That she is a Tree of Life to them that lay hold upon her, and that happy is every one that retaineth her.*

HE was thoroughly convinced of the Truth and Excellency of the Christian Religion, and therefore laboured mightily to establish his Hearers in their most holy Faith. He felt the Power of the Motives to the Practice of universal Righteousness and Holiness, proposed by the Gospel, and therefore he earnestly endeavoured to excite others by them. He found by Experience, the happy Influence of Faith to purify the Heart, and to support a virtuous Man under Afflictions and Temptations; and therefore he

laboured to engage others to walk by Faith.

HE knew that the Design of the Christian Ministry is to render Men wise, holy and good, and to conduct them to the celestial Felicity and Glory ; He was therefore very faithful and diligent in the Discharge of the Duties of his Office.

HIS publick Addresses to the Throne of Grace were most plain, serious and rational ; such as every good Christian could not but perceive instantly the Reasonableness of joining in.

HIS publick Discourses were clear, strong, warm, instructing, convincing, edifying. They were always concerning important Subjects ; And it was not grievous to him frequently to repeat and inculcate the same judicious Lessons, because he knew this to be safe and useful to his Hearers.

AND there is one Thing which I must take Notice of here, that he seldom wrote any Part of his Sermons ; He was patient of Thought ; He was always careful to render himself Master of his Subject, and could nicely discern whether this were the Case ; And he had such strength of Genius, that he could imprint on his Mind not only the Things, and the Order in which they were to be delivered, but also the Expressions ; and could, a great while after, recollect and repeat the same Discourse without omitting any of the Thoughts, and varying very few of the Expressions. But I mention this with some Regret ; because that by this Means the far greater Part of his most valuable Productions

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are now irrecoverably lost ; and lest some who have not his extraordinary natural Gifts, should attempt to imitate him in a thing in which he was perhaps inimitable.

AND thus I have delivered all that I intend to say concerning this excellent Character, of which Integrity, and strong Benevolence were the most shining Parts.

YOU among whom he has laboured in the Ministry of the Gospel for the space of twenty four Years know that I have not exceeded, and that in the Scriptural Sense of the Words, he was a perfect and upright Man, supported by the Faith of the Gospel.

YOU also know that, according to the *Psalmist's* Observation, his End was Peace. During his last Sickness, and at the approach of Death his Mind was calm, serene and cheerful. He always expressed an intire Resignation of himself to the Will of his merciful heavenly Father. He sometimes intimated to his Friends, that he had a longing Desire to die and go to Heaven : But he constantly added, that he thought such Desires consistent with a perfect Submission to the Divine Providence ; and that if he knew his own Heart, he was willing to bear what infinite Wisdom and Goodness should be pleased to inflict. To the last he discovered a most fervent Zeal for promoting the Glory of GOD, the Interests of Virtue and Religion, and the Good of Men. When he could hardly bear to have his Chamber crowded, and could not speak much, without Difficulty and Pain, by reason
of

of his Weakness and Asthma, he nevertheless desired You his Hearers, to come by turns, in small Companies, that he might bid you the last *Farewel*, and give you his dying Advice. You know how important, solemn and affectionate his Exhortations then were. I pray GOD, that they may never be forgotten.

HE continued to the last to discover a benevolent, friendly and complaisant Disposition. He expressed true Humbleness of Mind ; telling his Friends, " that he hoped, he had in him the Beginnings and Seeds of Virtue, but that he was " far from having attained to any considerable Degree of Perfection, and that he had served GOD " with some Measure of Faithfulness, but with " great Coldness and Remissness ; and that he hoped for the Remission of Sins, Acceptance with " GOD, and eternal Life through the Mediation " of CHRIST, and according to the gracious " Terms of the new Covenant, to which he heartily agreed." This was the Language of Faith, and of a pious Soul deeply impressed by the strong Obligations under which Christians, and Ministers are to live in the Practice of the most exalted Virtue ; and an Effect of that strict Watch, which he had long kept over his own Conduct, and of that severe Account to which he had called himself, when about to appear before GOD, the Judge of all. In those Circumstances, he expressed his intire Satisfaction with the Part which he had acted in the late Debates among the Protestant Dissenters in the *North of Ireland* ; that is to say, with the Side of the Que-

Question which he had chosen, and his steady Adherence to it ; But this he lamented that, Wrath had been mingled with those unhappy Debates. He had no anxious disquieting thoughts concerning his Family and Friends whom he was to leave in the World ; them he cheerfully committed to the Favour and Protection of the infinitely powerful, wise and good Governour of the Universe. He frequently discoursed with them concerning the great Goodness of GOD in blessing Mankind with the Christian Revelation, and of the Usefulness of the Gospel to support good Men in Affliction and at the Hour of Death, by the joyful Hope of a glorious and blessed Immortality. In his last Hours, while he could use his Tongue, it was employed in celebrating the praises of GOD, and in making to him wise, humble and fervent Supplication. And thus in the Excercise of Spiritual and rational Devotion, in the Transports of Divine Love, and in the comfortable Hope of Life everlasting, he fell asleep. He was *a perfect and upright Man*, and his *End was Peace*. He has left Us an excellent Example of living and dying well.

I shall now conclude with some useful Advices. And

First, let me exhort you to be very thankful to GOD for the Gospel, which comforts good Christians in all their Troubles, and more especially at the Hour of Death, To convince you of the Reasonableness of this Exhortation, give me leave to compare the Case of your late Rev'd Pastor

Pastor, at the approach of Death with that of *Socrates*, who was one of the wisest and best Men in the Heathen World, and who was condemned to die for opposing that Superstition which prevailed in his Country, and for his generous Endeavours to render those with whom he conversed wise and virtuous. In those Circumstances he solaced himself and his Friends, saying, *that Death would either put an End to his Existence, and consequently to all his Pains, or else that after Death he would enter into another World, and a more happy State.* * How poor was this Consolation, compared with that of one who at the Hour of Death could say, *I have fought a good Fight, I have finished my Course, I have kept the Faith; Henceforth there is laid up for me a Crown of Righteousness. I know on whom I have believed, even Jesus Christ, who is the Resurrection and the Life, in whom whosoever believeth, though he die, yet shall he live.*

Secondly, Be thankful to GOD by whose good Providence you have so long enjoyed the Benefit of such excellent Instructions, and of so holy an Example, as have been given you by your late worthy Minister. Few, Alas! very few of your Christian Brethren, now in the World, have been so highly favoured in these Respects.

Thirdly, Let me earnestly obtest and beseech you carefully to keep in your Remembrance the solid and useful Lessons, which you have been taught by that great and good Man, and his

his holy and heavenly Conversation among you. For assisting you to do this, I have, together with the Virtues which he practised, mentioned some of the Subjects, concerning which you and I have heard him Preach. You testified a very great Regard for him while alive; He had a just Sense of it, and a most hearty concern for your Welfare. You now bitterly bewail his Death; But the best Proof which you can give of your Respect for his Memory, and the best Improvement which you can make of your present Affliction, is to live by Faith, to walk in Love to GOD, to one another, to all your Christian Brethren, and Fellow-Creatures, and in those Paths of Righteousness and Holiness, in which, by his Doctrine and Example, he endeavoured to lead you. Thus shall you be his Joy and his Crown, in the Day of the Lord Jesus.

Fourthly, Let the Consideration of the Happiness of our deceased Friend assuage our Grief. On such Occasions Christians ought not to mourn, as they who have no Hope; But on the contrary to comfort themselves, and one another with those Consolations which the Religion of Jesus yields. We have full Assurance, as we could have without a particular Revelation from Heaven, that our dearly beloved Friend is incomparably more happy than he could have been in this World. And since we know, that in Heaven they who have been wise shall shine, as the Brightness of the Firmament; and they who have turned many to Righteousness, as the

Star

Stars forever ; We have Reason to believe that he shall enjoy a very high Degree in the Glories of the Saints, and shine forever as a Star of the first Magnitude. With him GOD has dealt very graciously. And as for Us, 'tis our Duty meekly to submit to the Will of GOD, who has been pleased to correct Us. Let us *neither despise the Chastning of the Lord, nor faint when we are rebuked of him.* It becomes us always to acknowledge, that what GOD does, is and must be wisest and best.

Lastly, LET us all unfeignedly devote ourselves to the Practise of Piety and Virtue, in which the Perfection and Glory of the Humane Nature consists, and without which we must be Strangers to true Peace. Let us not satisfy ourselves with idle Wishes, that we may *die the Death of the righteous, and that our last End may be like his.* They will avail us nothing. Let every one of Us, be careful *to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present World ; let us purify our selves, as God is pure ;* Let us faithfully endeavour, to the utmost of our Power to do Service to our Creator, and Good to our Fellow-Creatures. Thus shall our lives be happy, and our End, Peace. Thus shall we have Cause to triumph over that last Enemy Death, in the Expectation of a more perfect Triumph at the Resurrection of the Just ; when *Death shall be swallowed up in Victory.*

F I N I S.

To Benjamin Avery Esq^r
L.L.D.